

Using *The Book of Common Prayer* for Devotional Reading and Prayer

The Daily Office services in *The Book of Common Prayer* are a rich resource for individual or corporate scripture reading and prayer. The two primary services of the Daily Office are Morning Prayer (also known as Matins) and Evening Prayer (also known as Evensong). Thomas Cranmer (1489-1556), Archbishop of Canterbury and author of the English prayer book, included these services in the 1549 prayer book and they have been a staple in the succeeding versions of the prayer book, including *The Book of Common Prayer* of 1979, which we use at Christ Church, Charlottesville.

Daily Morning Prayer Rite One (traditional language) is found on BCP 37-60 and **Daily Morning Prayer Rite Two** (contemporary language) is found on BCP 75-102. Each version includes the following elements of scripture reading and prayer:

1. Opening sentences (choose one or more according to the season of the church year).
2. Confession and absolution.
3. Invitatory and Psalter (either use the Daily Lectionary as described below or read the assigned psalms for the day of the month. The Psalter is in BCP 585-808. If you wish to read through the entire Psalter each month, there are rubrics throughout the Psalter that will guide you on 582-584).
4. Scripture reading(s). You may choose readings from the Daily Office Lectionary (see * below) or whatever passage(s) of scripture you wish to read.
5. Following each scripture reading you may wish to read a canticle. There are various canticles assigned for each day of the week-see BCP 144. Canticles 1-7 are on BCP 47-53 and canticles 8-21 are on BCP 85-96. (Some of the canticles are repeated, one with traditional language and the other contemporary).
6. The Apostles Creed– The classic summation of basic Christian belief that goes back to the second century.
7. Prayers-includes the following prayers: i. The Lord's Prayer, ii. Suffrages A or B, iii. 3 Collects: (collect of the Day–see ** below, collect for the weekday/additional collect, and collect for mission), and iv. personal prayers/thanksgivings.
8. The General Thanksgiving– This is a powerful prayer of thanksgiving that reminds us of the big picture of all God has done for us in Christ, how He sustains us with His grace, how He calls us to live a life of gratitude in response to His love, all of it to His glory.
9. A Prayer of St. Chrysostom– A renowned early church father, St. John Chrysostom (347-407), bishop of Constantinople, was very well known as a powerful preacher. This beautiful concluding prayer is attributed to him and is based on Matthew 18:20.
10. Concluding sentences.

Daily Evening Prayer Rite One (traditional language) is found on BCP 61-74 and **Daily Evening Prayer Rite Two** (contemporary language) is found on BCP 115-126. Each version contains the same elements as Daily Morning Prayer with a few differences:

1. The opening words of the Invitatory are different.

2. The canticle after the first Scripture reading is always either the Song of Mary or the Song of Simeon. See BCP page 145 for specific canticles for each weekday.
3. The Suffrages differ somewhat from Morning Prayer.

* The Daily Office Lectionary beginning is in the BCP 934-1001. Follow the directions on 934-935 in order to find the scripture readings for the day. After awhile, it becomes second nature.

** The Collects are found on BCP pages 159-210 (traditional) and BCP 211-261 (contemporary). Each collect has a heading above it. To find the collect for the day, simply find the collect that matches the heading for the Daily Office readings for the day. In addition, a helpful website for finding out the assigned Daily Office scriptures and collects for the day is [here](#).

-Additional devotional services in *The Book of Common Prayer* include An Order of Service for Noonday (pages 103-107), An Order of Worship for the Evening (108-114), An Order for Compline (127-135) and Daily Devotions for Individuals and Families (136-140). Simply follow the directions for each service.

-An online version of BCP is available at www.bcponline.com.